# THE FRIER AND THE BOY.

Very delectable, though unpleasant to all step-Mothers.

*Newly corrected and amended.*

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# A Merry Jest
## OF THE
# FRIER and the BOY.

THere was a man in my Countrie
who in his life had wifes three,
A blessing full of joy.
By his first wife a child he had,
which was a pretty sturdy lad,
A good unhappy boy.
His father lov'd him very well,
But his step-mother none a deal:
I tell you as I think.
All things she thought lost by the Roob,
which might the boy do any good,
As either meat or drink.
And yet, I wis, it was but bad,
Nor half enough thereof he had,
But evermore the worst.
And therefore evil might she fare,
That wrought the little boy such care,
So far-forth as she durst.
Unto the man the wife can say,
I would ye put this boy away,
And that right soon in haste.
Truely he is a wicked lad,
I would some other man him had,
That would him better chaste.
Then said the good-man: Dame not so,
I will not let the young boy go,
He's but of tender age:
He shall with me this year abide,
Till he be grown more strong and try'd,
For to win better wage.
We have a man a sturdy lout,

Who keeps our neat the fields about,
And sleepeth all the day.
He shall bid home, as God me shield,
And Jack shall pass into the field,
To keep them, if he may.
Then said the wife in parliment,
Husband thereto I give consent,
For that I think it need.
On the morrow when it was day,
The little boy went on his way.
Towards the fields with speed:
Of no man took he any care,
But sung, hay ho, away the mare,
With mirth he did pursue.
Forward he drew with might and main
Until he came amidst the plain,
And then his dinner drew,
But when he saw it was so bad,
Full little list thereto he had,
And put it up from his sight.
Saying: He had no will to taste,
And that his hunger still should last,
Till he came home at night.
Now as the boy sat on a hill,
There came an old man him untill,
Was walking by the way:
Who said: My son, now God thee see,
Full welcome, Father, may ye be,
The little boy did say.
The old man said: I hunger sore:
Jack, hast thou any meat in store,
Which thou mayst give to me.
The boy reply'd: So God me save,
To such poor victuals as I have,
Right welcome you shall be.
Of this the old man was full glad,
The boy drew forth such as he had,
And said: Go to gladly.

The

The old man eaſie was to pleaſe,
He ate, and made himſelf at eaſe,
Saying: Son, gramercy.
And for the meat thou gave to me,
I will give three things unto thee,
What e're thou will intreat.
Then ſaid the Boy, the beſt I know,
Is that ye give to me a bow,
With which I birds may get,
A bow, my ſon I ſhall thee give
The which ſhall laſt while thou doſt live,
Yea never bow nor break:
For if thou ſhoot therein all day,
Walking or winking any way,
The mark ſtill thou ſhalt hit.
Now when the bow in hand he felt,
And had arrows under his belt,
He merry was, I wiſs:
And ſaid, had I a pipe withal,
Though never ſo little nor ſo ſmall,
I had all that I wiſh.
A pipe ſam, thou ſhalt have alſo,
Which in true muſick ſo ſhall go,
I put thee out of doubt:
That whoſoever ſhall it hear,
Shall have no power to forbear,
But laugh and leap about.
Now tell me what the third ſhall be,
For three things will I give to thee,
As I have ſaid before.
The boy then ſmiling, anſwer made,
I have enough for my poor trade,
And will deſire no more.
The old man ſaid, my troath is plight,
Thou ſhalt have all I thee behight,
Say on now let me ſee.
At home I have, the boy reply'd,
A cruel ſtep-mother full of pride,
Who is moſt curſt to me. when

When meat my father gives to me.
She wishes poison it might be,
And stareth in my face,
Now when she gazeth on me so,
I wish she might a fart let go,
That might ring through the place.
The old man answered then anon,
When that she looks thy face upon,
Her tail shall wind the horn.
So loudly that who shall it hear,
Shall not be able to forbear,
But laugh her unto scorn.
So farewel son, the old man cry'd,
God keep you sir, the boy reply'd,
I take my leave of thee.
And he that best of all things may,
Protect thee safe both night and day,
Gramercy, son, said he.
When it grew near into the night,
Jack well advis'd, hy'd home full right:
It was his ordinance:
And as he went his pipe did blow,
The whilst his cattle on a row.
About him fast did dance.
This to the town he pyps full trim,
His skipping beasts do follow him,
Into his fathers close.
He went and put them up each one,
Then went into the house anone
Into the hall he goes.
His father at his Supper sat
And little Jack espy'd well that,
I am hungry by Saint John.
Meatless I have been all the day,
And kept your beasts they did not stray.
My dinner was but ill.
His father took a capons wing,
And at his son he did it fling.
Bidding him eat his fill.

This grieves his fley-dames heart full sore
Who loathes the Lad still more and more
And stares him in the face.
With that she let go such a blast,
As made the people all agast,
And sounded through the place.
Each one did laugh and make good game
But the curst wife grew red for shame,
And wisht she had been gone.
Pardie, the boy said, well I wot,
That gun was well charged and shot,
And might have broken a stone.
Full curstly she lookt on him tho,
And then another fart let go,
Which gart the thunder rise.
Quoth Jack: Sir, did you ever see
A woman let her pellets flee,
More thick and more at ease,
Fe, said the boy unto his Dame,
Temper thy tel-tale bum for shame,
Which made her full sorrow.
Dame, said the good maid go thy way,
For why, I swear by night and day,
Thy gear is not to borrow.
Now afterwards as you shall hear,
Unto the house there came a frier,
And lay there all the night.
This wife did love him as a saint.
And made to him a great complaint,
Of Jack's most vile despite.
We have quoth she, within a wis,
A wicked boy, no shrewder is,
Which doth me mighty care.
I dare not look upon his face,
Nor hardly show my shameful case,
So filthily I fare.
For my sake, meet him to morrow,
Beat him well, and give him sorrow;
Yea, make him blind and lame. The

The Frier swore, he would him beat,
She prayed him not to forget.
The boy did her much shame.
He is a witch quoth he, I smel,
But, quoth the Frier, I'le beat him well:
Of that take you no care.
I'le teach him witch-craft, if I may,
O, quoth the wife, do so I pray
Lay on and do not spare
Early next morning the boy arose,
And to the fields full soon he goes
His cattle for to drive.
The Frier up as early gate,
He was afraid he came too late,
And ran full fast and blyth.
But when he came upon the land,
He found where little Jack did stand,
Keeping his beasts alone.
Now boy, he said, God give the shame,
What hast thou done to thy step dame,
Tell me forthwith anone.
And if thou canst not quite thee well,
I'le beat thee till thy body swell,
I will no longer bide.
The boy reply'd: What aileth thee?
My step dame is as well as ye,
What need you thus to chide.
Sir will you see mine arrow flee,
And hit you small bird on the eye,
And other things withall.
Good Sir, if I have little wit,
Yet yonder bird I mean to hit.
And give her you I shall.
There sat a smal bird on a brier,
Shoot, shoot thou wag, then said the frier,
For that fain would I see.
Jack hit the bird upon the head,
So right that she fell down for dead,
No further could she flee.

Fast

Fast to the bush the Frier then went,
And up the bird in hands he hint,
Much wondering at the chance.
Mean time Jack took his pipe and play'd
So loud, the Frier grew mad appy'd,
and gang to skip and dance.
No sooner he the pipe sound heard,
But mad-man like he bound and sard,
Leaping the bush about.
The sharp briers scratcht him by the face,
And by the breach and other place,
That fast the blood ran out.
He tare his coat down to the skirt,
His cap, his cool, his linnen shirt;
And every other weed.
The thorns the while were rough & thick
And did his privy members prick,
That fast they gan to bleed.
Jack as he piped, laught among,
The Frier with briers was vilely flung,
He looped wondrous hie.
At last the Frier held up his hand,
And said, I can no longer stand:
Oh, I shall dancing die.
Gentle Jack, thy pipe hold still,
And here I vow, for God no ill,
To do thee any wo.
Jack laughing to him this reply'd:
Frier, skip out at the other side,
Thou hast free leave to go.
Out of the bush the Frier then went,
All marr'd, ragged, scracht and rent,
And torn on every side.
Hardly on him was left a clout,
To wrap his belly round about,
His harlotry to hide.
The thorns had scratcht him by the face,
On hands and thighs, and every place,
He was all bath'd in blood. So

So much, that who the Frier did see,
For fear of him were fain to flee,
Thinking he had been wood.
When to the good-wife home he came,
He made no brags for very shame,
To see his cloaths rent all:
Much sorrow in his heart he had,
And every man did guess him mad,
When he was in the hall.
The good-wife said, where hast thou been,
Sure in some evil place I ween,
By sight of thine array.
Dame, said he, I came from thy son,
The Devil and he hath me undone,
No man him conquer may.
With that the good-man he came in,
The wife set on her madding pin,
Cry'n, here's a foul array.
Thy son that is thy life most dear,
Hath almost slain the holy Frier,
Alace, and well away.
The good-man said, Benedicite,
What hath the vile Boy done to thee,
Now tell me without let.
The devil take him, the Frier then said,
He made me dance despite mine head,
Amongst the thorns the boy go bet.
The good-man said unto him tho,
Father, hadst thou been murdered so,
It had been deadly sin.
The Frier to him made this reply,
The pipe did sound so merrily,
That I could never blin,
Now when it grew to almost night,
Jack the boy came full right,
as he had wont to do,
But when he came into the hall,
Full soon his father did him call,
And bid him come him to. Boy,

Boy, he said come let me hear,
What hast thou done unto this Frier,
Lie not in any thing.
Father he said now by my birth,
I play'd him but a fit of mirth,
And piped him a spring,
That pipe, said his father, I would hear,
Now, God forbid, cry'd out the Frier,
His hands then did he wring.
You shall, the boy said, by Gods grace,
The Frier reply'd, wo and alace,
Making his sorrows ring.
For Gods love, said the wretched Frier,
And if you will that strange pipe hear,
Bind me fast to a post.
For sure my fortune this I read,
If dance I do, I am but dead,
My woful life is lost.
Strong rops they took both sharp & round
And to the post the Frier they bound,
In middle of the Hall.
And they that at the table sat,
Laughed and made good sport thereat,
Saying, Frier, thou canst not fall.
Then said the good-man to the boy,
Jack, pipe me up a merry toy,
Pipe freely when thou will.
Father, the boy said, verily,
You shall have mirth enough and glee,
Till you bid me be still.
With that his pipe he quickly hint,
And piped whilst in verament,
Each creature gan to dance.
Lightly they skipt and leapt about,
Yearking their legs. now in now out,
Striving aloft to prance.
The good-man made himself good sport
To see the dance in his mad sort,
The good-wife sat not still. But

But dancing ſtill ſhe lookt on Jack,
Anp faſt her tail did double each crak,
Loud as a water mill.
The Frier this while was almoſt loſt,
He knockt his pate againſt the poſt,
It was his dancing grace:
The rop rub'd him under the chin,
The blood ran from his tatred skin,
In many a naked place.
Jack piping ran into the ſtreet,
They followed him with nimble feet,
Having no power to ſtay.
And in their haſte the door did crack,
Each tumbling over his fellows back,
Unmindful of their way.
The neighbors that were dwelling by,
Hearing the pipe ſo merrily,
Came dancing to the gate.
Some leapt o're doors, ſome o're the hatch
No man would ſtay to draw the latch,
But thought he came too late.
Some ſick or ſlerping in their bed,
As they by chance lift up their head,
Were with the pipe awaked.
Straight out they ſtart throgh doors & locks
Some in their ſhirts, ſome in their ſmocks,
And ſome ſtark belly naked.
When all were gathered round about,
There was a vile unruly rout,
That danced in the ſtreet,
Of which ſome lame and could not go,
Striving to leap did tumble ſo:
They danſt on hands and feet.
Jack tyr'd with ſport, ſaid now I'll reſt,
Do, quoth his father I hold it beſt,
Thou cloyeſt me with chear.
I pray thee Boy thou quiet ſit,
In truth this was the merrieſt fit.
I heard this ſeven year. All

All these that dancing thither came,
Laught heartily, and made good game,
Yet some got many a fall.
Thou curled boy, cry'd out the Frier,
Here do I summon thee to appear
Before the Official.
Look thou be here on friday next,
I'll meet thee then, though now perplext,
For to obtain thy sorrow.
The boy reply'd, I make a vow,
Frier, I'll appear as soon as thou,
If friday were to morrow.
But friday came as you shall hear,
Jacks step dame and the dancing Frier,
Together they were met:
And other people a great pace,
Flockt to the Court to hear each case,
The Official were set.
Much civil matters was to do,
More Libels read nor one or two,
Both against Priest and Clark.
Some there had Testaments to probe,
Some women were through wanton lobe,
Which got strokes in the dark.
Each Proctor there did plead his case,
When forth did step Frier Tobias,
And Jacks step-dame also.
Sir Official, aloud said he,
I have brought a wicked lad to thee,
Hath done me mighty wo.
He is a witch as I do fear.
In Orleans he can find no peer:
This of my truth I know.
He is a Devil, quoth the wife,
And almost bereav'd me of my life:
At that her taill did blow.
So loud, th'assembly laught thereat,
And said, her pistols crack was flat.
The charge was all amis. Dame

Dame, quoth the good Official,
Proceed, and tell me forth thy tale,
And do not let for this.
The wife that feared another crack,
Stood mute and nere a word she spake;
Shame put her in such dread.
Ha, (said the Frier) right angerly,
Knave, this is all still long of thee,
now will not thou speed.
The Frier said, Sir Official,
This wicked boy will vex us all
Unless you do him chast:
Sir, he hath yet a pipe truelie,
will make you dance and leap full hie,
And break your heart at last.
The Official reply'd, Parde,
Such a pipe I fain would see,
And what mirth it can make.
Now, God forbid, reply'd the Frier,
That ere we should that vile pipe hear,
Ere I my way hence make.
Pipe on, Jack, said the Official
And let me hear thy cunning all,
Jack blew his pipe full loud,
That every man start up and danst,
Proctors and Priests, and Sumners prankt
And all in that great crowd
Over the dask the Official ran,
And hopt upon the table then,
Straight jumpt into the floor.
The Frier that danst as fast as he,
Met him mid-way dangerously,
Brake others face full sore.
The Register leapt from his pen,
And hopt into the throng of men,
His ink-horn in his hand.
With swinging round about his head,
Some he stroke blind, some almost dead,
Some they could hardly stand. The

The Proctors flung the bills about,
The good-wifes they made many a shout,
Perfuming all the mirth.
The Sumners as they had been wood,
Leapt o'r the forms and seats so good,
And wallowed on the earth.
Wenches that for their pennance came,
And other weeds of worldly shame
Danst every one as fast.
Each sat upon a merry pin,
Some broke their heads, and some their chin,
And some their noses brast.
The Official thus for turmoild,
Half swelt with sweat, and almost spoil'd
Cry'd to the wanton child.
To pipe no more within that place,
But stay the sound, even for Gods grace,
and love of Mary mild.
Jack said, as thou wilt, it shall be,
Provided I may hence go free,
And no man do me wrong,
Neither this Woman nor this Frier,
Nor any other creature here.
He answered him anone.
Jack, I to thee my promise plight,
In thy defence I mean to fight,
And will oppose thy foe.
Jack cast his pipe, then all still stood,
Some laughing hard, some raging wood
Some parted at that tide.
The Official and the Sumner.
The step-dame, and the wicked Frier,
With much joy, mirth and pride.

*FINIS.*